

CHANDAMAMA

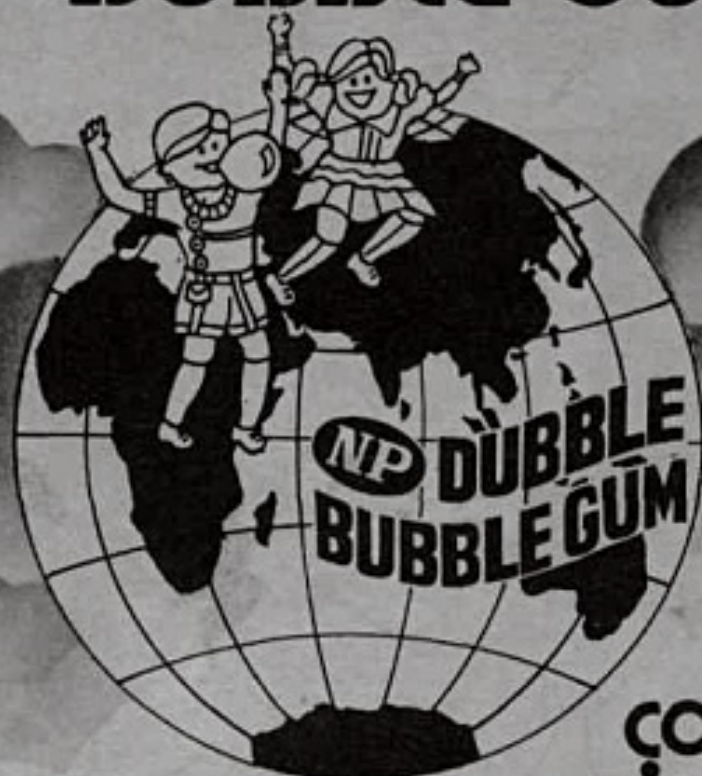
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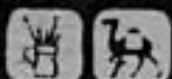


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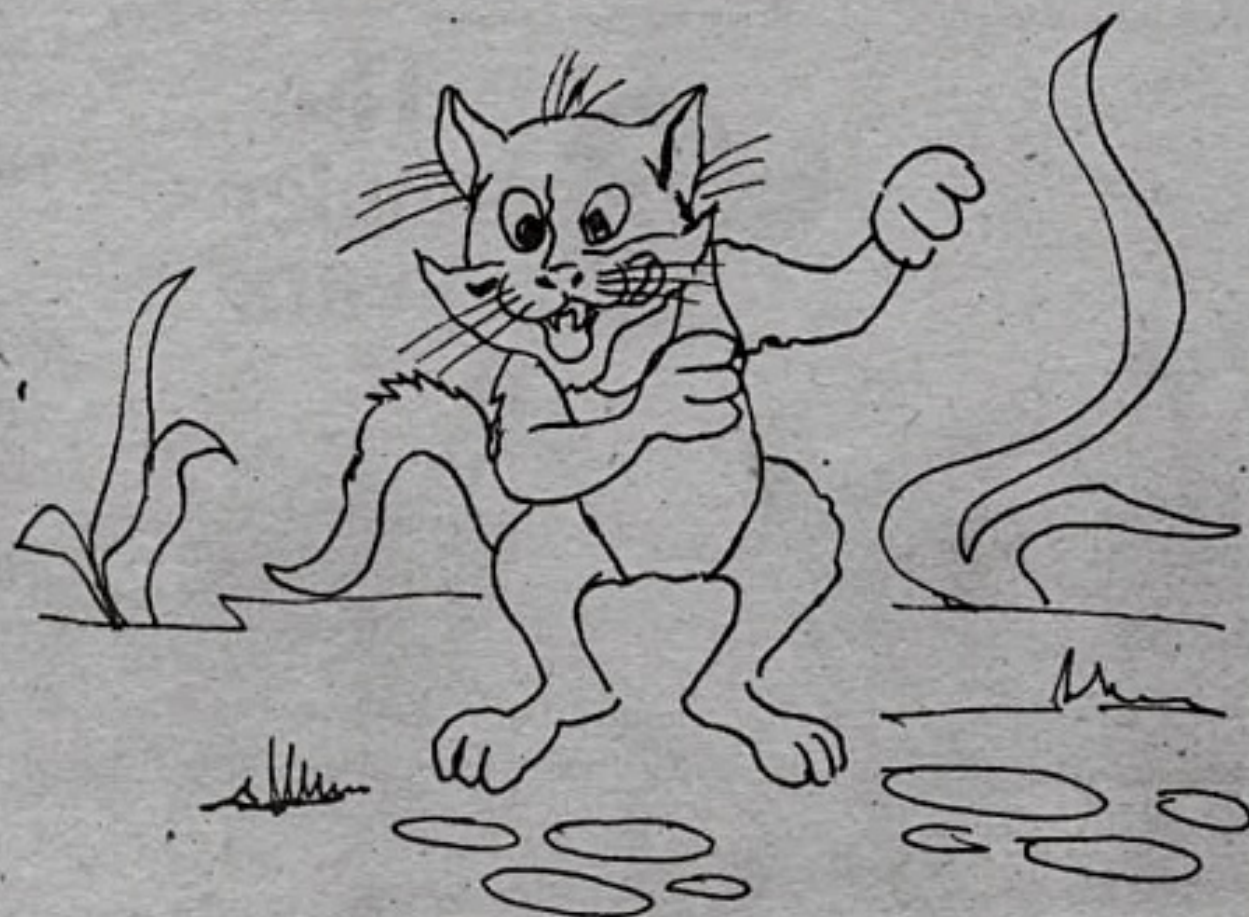
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PLUS SEVEN STORIES
AND SEVEN OTHER FEATURES

GOLDEN WORDS OF YORE

पुराणमित्येव न साधु सर्वं न चापि काव्यं नवमित्यवद्यम् ।

सन्तः परीक्ष्यतरद् भजन्ते मूढः परप्रत्ययनेयबुद्धिः ॥

Purāṇamityeva na sādhu sarvaṁ

na cāpi kāvyaṁ navamityavadyam

Santaḥ parīkṣyatarad bhajante

mūḍhaḥ parapratyayaneyabuddhiḥ

A work (book) does not become sanctified only because it is ancient; so also a work does not deserve criticism only because it is new. The wise scrutinises a work and gives his opinion on its merit whereas the ignorant is swept by other's opinions.

— *Malavikagnimitram*

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CHANDAMAMA

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No. 4


Founder : CHAKRAPANI

AN INVITATION

The young readers of the *Chandamama* participate in the making of the magazine by submitting their queries for the column, "Let Us Know", their choice of captions for the "Photo-Caption-Contest", and by constantly sending to the magazine their suggestions and ideas. They frankly tell the magazine what they liked in its pages and what they did not.

The *Chandamama* now invites from them a greater participation. From January 1980, the magazine will carry a section that will be devoted to their writing. For the time being, the section will publish two kinds of contributions: stories (original or folktales retold) and memorable personal experiences.

Our young readers must not rush with their submissions. They must be sure that what they intend sending is really readable—that it merits the attention of tens of thousands of intelligent readers in India and abroad. They should also take care to see that the pieces they send are short—not exceeding 400 words. The *Chandamama* will be happy to send a token reward in cash for a piece selected for publication.





LET US KNOW

Kindly tell us about the significance of Deewali. Which of the legends about the origin of this festival is most acceptable?

*Gangadhar Jena,
Pichukuli, Orissa.*

All the age-old festivals of India are attempts at either directing the emotions of life towards some higher purpose, or reminding the people of some ennobling episode of the past.

Deewali is a shorter form of *Deepavali* which means a cluster of lamps. Speaking from a mystic plane, the flame symbolises man's aspiration for truth and knowledge, whereas darkness symbolises ignorance. Each one lighting a lamp (or many lamps) marks the individual's determination for conquering the darkness of ignorance.

However, a festival springs from some memorable event. Of the legends that are prevalent about the origin of *Deewali*, the most acceptable one concerns Rama. The citizens of Ayodhya lighted numerous lamps to welcome him on his triumphant journey home, after vanquishing Ravana and rescuing Sita. To them Rama was the light. Through a display of light they received him.

The other legend which ranks next in popularity concerns Krishna. Naraka, the demon-king of Pragyotishpur, kidnapped many girls and imprisoned them in his invincible castle. The families who lost their daughters plunged into sorrow. No wonder that their houses remained dark till Krishna killed the demon and rescued their daughters, upon which they - and all the people - lighted their houses with a vengeance.

(Readers are welcome to send such queries on culture, literature or general knowledge which should be of interest to others too, for brief answers from the Chandamama.)



THREE PRINCESSES

(Story so far: Sudharma, the king of Shravasti, had three daughters, triplets: Subhasini, Suhasini, and Sukesini. The king was intrigued to see that the children often faced unexpected dangers, although all measures were taken to make their lives safe and smooth. One day the king received the information that the girls had swooned away in the garden.)

2. The Mysterious Vulture

From one side the king and from another side the queen came running into the garden. The three princesses were lying senseless, separated from one another by a few yards. The palace maids were doing their best to nurse them back to sense.

The king had been followed

by the minister. While the queen shed tears and the king sat stupefied, the minister rolled his keen eyes in every direction. Soon he saw a strange kind of fruit lying hidden in the grass, not far from one of the girls. He picked it up and saw it bearing the marks of tender teeth clamped on it.



In the meanwhile messengers had run to summon the court-physician. The physician arrived there panting and sweating and took the fruit from the minister's hand.

Soon his face twitched in surprise and fear.

"Who could have brought this poison-fruit here? This deadly thing is available only in the deepest part of the forest of the north!" exclaimed the physician.

"Is that so? I'm afraid, the princesses had had bites of this fruit!" observed the minister.

"Indeed, it might be so," said one of the maids. "I was

standing guard on them. Princess Subhasini complained of thirst. I went away to fetch water. By the time I returned, two of them had already swooned away. The youngest princess collapsed before my eyes and I saw the fruit rolling away from her hand."

Now that the physician had been sure about the nature of the affliction of the girls, it did not take him long to treat them with the right medicine. The princesses sat up soon and looked at all with surprise.

"But we must know how such a dangerous fruit came here!" said the king. The maids and the guards scanned the whole garden to see if there were more fruits of the kind hidden anywhere. But they did not find any.

"Look to the tree-top yonder!" shouted out the minister who too was surveying the garden.

The king and the others followed the direction in which the minister's hand was pointedly raised. Atop a tall tree sat a vulture—double the size of an ordinary vulture.

"I'm sure, this is the creature that brought the fruit here!" said the minister.

"Shoot it down!" ordered the king. At once a dozen arrows shot up. But the vulture took off and flew clear of the arrows. It made a circle on the garden as if taking note of its situation and then rose higher and higher and disappeared amidst the clouds!

The sweet princesses giggled. To them all was fun!

"No, my daughters, you should not have clamped your teeth on an unknown fruit!" said the king.

The girls giggled again. The king had no heart to utter a word more in the way of chiding them.

But the same night he convened a meeting of his advisers to discuss the incident.

The advisers, in one voice, said that it was necessary to submit to the most learned astrologers, for scrutiny, the horoscopes of the princesses. Accordingly, two of the wisest astrologers of the neighbouring kingdoms were invited and they sat in conference with King Sudharma's court-astrologers for three days.

Thereafter their spokesman told the king, "My lord, we are sorry to inform you that the princesses are passing through a



fateful period. The period will last five years."

"What is the precaution that can be taken against any danger to their lives?" asked the anxious king.

The spokesman of the astrologers looked sad. He cleared his voice and said, "I am afraid, I may sound inhuman. But the only way to secure the maximum safety for the princesses is to keep them separate from their mother for those five years."

"How can that be possible?" asked the king with some agony.

"My lord, that has to be made possible. Such is the demand



of the complex nature of their fate!" said the wise man.

The astrologers departed, leaving the king in a highly pensive mood. How to separate the delicate girls from their loving mother? The king thought and thought on the issue but could not find a solution. Such was the queen's attachment for her daughters that she would go crazy if she did not see them even for an hour. How to broach the proposal of separation to her?

The king was strolling in the garden brooding on the question. Beyond the garden there was a stretch of orchard which

was almost a forbidden ground because it contained the tombs of his ancestors. Desiring to be alone, he crossed into that area.

Wandering thoughtfully, he reached the shade of an ancient tree. Near it lay a huge boulder. A chunk of earth had given way below the boulder, revealing a hole. As the king looked into it, he saw something like a passage going down.

When he was a child he had heard the legend of an underground palace that had been built by one of his forefathers. In the course of time the location of the secret passage leading into the palace had been forgotten. The king suspected that the opening he saw was the top of that very passage.

He took careful steps and descended into the hole. Indeed, his guess proved right. The passage led into a well-preserved and well-furnished underground mansion.

He wandered through the various parts of the building and marvelled at its beauty. Though quite old, it looked fresh and elegant. He was all praise for its builders.

By the time he came out to the open, he had taken a

firm decision. "The chance-discovery of the underground palace is Providential. I must hide my daughters in it so that they can remain away from all evil possibilities," he told himself.

The same night he called a confidential meeting of some of his most trusted bodyguards and told them all about his scheme. He also made a careful selection of some of the maids. He made promises of handsome rewards for them and they agreed to live in the underground palace for five years attending upon and guarding the princesses. They took the oath of secrecy.

Next day, while the girls were playing in the garden, the king himself led them into the palace. It was a novel experience for

the girls. The palace abounded in toys and a variety of other things to keep them amused. The guards and maids were already there to receive them.

"Father, why should we not live here?" they asked.

"Why not, sweet ones!" said the king.

The girls were playing hide and seek when the king sneaked out to the open and walked towards his apartment.

"Where are my daughters?" asked the queen.

Till then the king had not thought out a suitable reply to this inevitable question.

He stood fidgeting with his fingers. The queen understood that some danger had befallen the girls. She gave out a cry and swooned away. *To continue*





LEGENDS AND PARABLES OF INDIA

THE BOARS AND THEIR ENEMIES

This happened in a remote past. A villager once brought home a boar cub and nurtured it with great care and love. The cub grew into a robust boar. It followed its master wherever he went. With its sword-like teeth, it scared the village dogs. Cows often snapped their ropes and ran away at its sight.

The villager grew apprehensive about its safety. "Someone might kill my pet simply out of jealousy. A village is not the safe place for a boar. I must leave it in its proper place that is the forest," thought the villager.

Accordingly, he led the boar into the forest and bade it good-bye. The boar missed his loving master; but was

happy to be in the forest. He ran about freely and gave out jolly cries. He did so for such a long time that he attracted a number of boars.

"I greet you all. I intend living with you. This is indeed a nice place, with a prolific growth of grass, trees and caves to protect ourselves from rain and sun, and a cool lake to quench our thirst," observed the new-comer.

"You are most welcome to live with us if you are willing to share our sorrow," said one of its listeners.

"What is your sorrow?"

"A tiger that lives on the hill kills one of our tribe everyday. The tiger is the friend of a human being who too lives on

the hill. They share the meat," replied the boars.

"Is it not rather strange that a single tiger should prove a menace to so many boars? It is because you do not know how to act in unison that you are suffering. I have lived among men. I know how they face a fearful beast when one intrudes into their village. We can follow their example," said the new-comer.

He devoted the whole day to teaching his fellow-boars a certain discipline. At night they dug a deep pit in front of the hill. As soon as it was morning, they stood in a semi-circle in front of the hill out of which the tiger emerged. In front of them stood the new-comer, just on the brink of the pit.

Soon the tiger appeared on the hill and looked below. Its face brightened up at the sight of so many boars. But, next moment, it grew a bit curious. Why on earth should so many boars gather before its dwelling? They surely did not do so to make its task of pouncing upon one of them easy!

The tiger stretched its limbs. Immediately all the boars did the same. The tiger yawned. The boars also did the same.



That not only surprised the tiger, but also bred fear in its heart. It took a few backward steps and entered its cave.

"What's the matter? Why did you come back so soon, and that too without a prey?" asked the fellow who had stuck a friendship with the tiger.

The tiger reported to the fellow about the unusual conduct of the boars. "They seem rather impertinent!" he said.

"Impertinent? One roar from you and they won't know how to take to their hooves! And, mind you, never retreat. Leap upon one of them and see the fun!" advised the fellow.

The tiger gathered courage and came out to the open. The boars were still there.

The tiger passed a hurried glance on them. The newcomer who stood in front of the semi-circular formation seemed to be their leader.

The tiger gave out a roar and made a furious jump at the leader, not knowing of the pit behind the target. In the nick of time the boar swerved to one side. The tiger landed on the brink of the pit and, unable to balance itself, rolled down into the pit.

Before it had stood up inside the pit, the boar pierced its sword-like teeth into its heart again and again and killed it.

The tiger's collaborator had

come out of the cave to see what was happening.

"Let us not leave this fellow," shouted the leader-boar. At once all the boars rushed at him. He ran for his life and climbed a tree. He knew that the boars would not be able to follow him to the tree-top.

But the boars knew better. They kept on digging around the tree till it fell down, bringing about the man's death.

The spirit of the Buddha, which, in that twilight of civilisation, was dwelling in a huge tree, saw all that passed, and said, "A tiger is powerful and a man is clever. Yet, the boars could get rid of the two enemies, thanks to their unity and determination."

From the Buddha Jatakas



In days gone by there was a certain king who had a very good man for his minister.

In fact, the minister was not only good but highly intelligent and wise too. He guarded his master's interest jealously, but never allowed any officer any scope for going corrupt. He kept a vigilant eye over the conduct of all the officers.

But that annoyed the officers very much. They knew that they had no luck, as long as the minister held his position. They plotted to overthrow him.

Once there was a fierce quarrel between two governors in charge of two distant states of the kingdom. The king sent the minister to settle the quarrel.

It was a mission that took a long time. During the period of the minister's absence from the court, the officers made out a false case against him and poisoned the king's ears.

As soon as the minister was back after settling the quarrel, the king, without giving him a hearing, threw him into prison.

"Let God's wish be done,"





said the minister and quietly walked into the prison without a murmur.

He was lodged in a separate room and served with meagre food. Months passed and then years. The officers had a merry time with the vigil over them gone. They were never tired of inventing new tales of the minister's injustice and treachery to keep the king's wrath undiminished.

Seven years passed. One day the king put on a false beard and the garb of a mendicant and went out of the palace to gather a first-hand knowledge of the condition of his subjects.

Walking through the town he saw a happy crowd gathered before a large house. He remembered that the house belonged to the imprisoned minister.

He stopped and asked some people what occasioned their happiness.

"Don't you know? The just minister, the friend of the good and the foe of the bad, is returning home today. Good sense has made the king decide to free him at last!" said a man.

The king was surprised. He had not ordered to set the minister free! How could such a rumour have spread?

On further enquiry, he was informed that the minister himself had sent the good news through an attendant of the prison.

"Who does not know that the unlucky king was misguided by his corrupt officers? But it seems he has realised his blunder. We are dying to see our minister free!" said many voices.

The disguised king moved towards the prison. He was thoughtful. Was he really misguided? Many good deeds of the minister came back to his mind. When he remembered

the faces of the officers who spoke against the minister, he had a strong feeling that they were liars.

On reaching the prison he disclosed his identity to the jailor and entered the house, and walked into the minister's room. The minister looked the ghost of himself. The disguised king was almost moved to tears.

The minister greeted the king whom he took to be a mendicant. He was not surprised because at times holy men were let into the prison to talk to the convicts.

The disguised king sat down and had a frank talk with the minister. He was left in no doubt about the minister's innocence. He repented for having punished him.

"Is it true that you sent word to your home that you'd be set free today?" asked the king.

"Indeed, I did, in a way. You can say, that was my madness," said the minister and went on to narrate what made him do so:

On his way back to the town after his last mission, he was crossing a river by a boat. He felt thirsty. His servant poured some drink into a cup. It was a highly precious cup, studded



with gold. Suddenly the cup slipped off his hand and fell into the water.

There was a diver in the boat. He made several dives to recover the cup, but in vain. The minister was observing him while playing with his diamond ring which he had taken out of his finger.

"Sir, can you tell me where exactly the cup sank?" asked the diver.

The minister threw the ring to mark the spot. He did so unmindful of what he was throwing.

"Sir! What did you do?" screamed out his companions.

However, the diver took another dive and emerged with the cup. And lo and behold! the ring was in the cup!

Exclamations of joy greeted the event. But said the minister, "This is verily the rarest coincidence of goodluck I have ever known. I shall not be surprised if such a lucky event is followed by a misfortune!"

Back in the court, he was thrown into the prison!

For seven years he had not eaten well. He felt a great desire to have some good food. He sold his ring through the jailor and obtained varieties of food. But ready to sit down for taking them, he found that they had been nibbled at by mice. He had to throw them away.

"This was the climax of my misfortune. I should not be surprised if good fortune visits me after this—if the king frees me!" he exclaimed.


This was heard by an attendant who, in his jubilation, ran to the minister's home and announced that the minister was to be free that day!

The disguised king was amused to hear this.

"My passing by your house today was ordained by Providence!" he said, tears rolling down his cheeks. He embraced the minister and, shedding his disguise, ordered for a ceremonial procession to lead the minister home.

Now it was the turn of the corrupt officers to be thrown into gaol.





*New Tales of King Vikram,
and the Vampire*

A BAGFUL OF GOLD

Dark was the night and fearful the atmosphere. The silence of the hour was broken from time to time by the weird laughter of some unearthly beings and the howls of jackals. Flashes of lightning revealed fearful faces.

But King Vikram swerved not. He returned to the tree, climbed it and brought down the corpse. Then, as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground, the vampire that had possessed the corpse said, "O King, hope, you will be able to enjoy the fruits of your labours, unlike Bhusan. Let me narrate Bhusan's story to you. That should give you some relief."

The vampire went on: Bhusan was a farmer who lived peacefully with his wife and two sons. He worked in his fields sincerely and his labour did not go unrewarded.

He ought to have considered himself happy. His wife manag-



ed the household well and his sons were obedient to him. In fact, Bhusan had no complaint against anything.

But, in leisurely moments, he thought: how nice it would be if I grew rich all on a sudden—say, if I got a bagful of gold!

One day, alone at house, he murmured out his wish. Lo and behold! a closed bag containing something heavy fell before him with a thud.

The miracle was done by a benevolent spirit who lived in his house, unknown to anybody.

Surprised, Bhusan opened the bag. There were glittering gold ornaments inside.

He shut the door and the windows of the room and danced around the bag in joy, until he heard the footsteps of someone passing by his house. He stopped and hid the bag under his bed.

But he knew that he must take better precautions against the wealth being stolen. His wife and sons were not to return before an hour. It was already evening. He carried the bag to the backyard of the house and buried it under a neem tree.

Did any body see him burying the gold? The doubt did not let him sleep. Several times at night he rose from his bed and peeped at the neem tree through his window.

Next day he did not go to the fields. He sat absorbed in the thought of the gold—how best to use it. Should he sell the ornaments all at once and buy more lands or should he sell them one by one and spend the money in living comfortably?

He was afraid of speaking anything about the miracle to his wife or sons, lest they should doubt his story! They were puzzled to see him glum and thoughtful. But he evaded all their questions.

“Let me have some idea about

the price of gold," he told himself and made a trip to the town. On the outskirts of the town was a place where people condemned to death were hanged or beheaded. He saw the noose ready and someone being led towards it.

"What was his crime?" he asked one of those who had gathered there to watch the execution.

"The fellow had stolen gold ornaments from a merchant's house," he was told.

He did not go into the town. He returned home and took to bed. "What if the ornaments I have got are also stolen property? What if I am caught while selling them?" These were the questions which haunted him. He refused to have food.

"I wish the gold bag was only a dream!" he murmured at midnight. He walked to the neem tree and dug the place and examined the bag. No, they were not dream, but solid gold. He levelled the ground and returned to bed.

It was found in the morning that he had caught fever. A physician was called. But his medicines did not produce any effect on him. His temperature rose and he was given to deli-



rium. He was heard muttering, "No, no, I have not stolen them!"

"What is the matter with you?" his wife asked him time and again. But he responded only with sighs.

As his condition grew worse, his wife shed tears and his sons were bewildered. But they saw no way to help him.

One afternoon Bhusan called them to his bedside and gazed at them for a long time. Then he suddenly laughed. But thereafter he lost consciousness and an hour later, died.

The vampire paused for a moment and then said, "O King,

I have some doubts. If Bhusan craved for gold, why did he fail to use it? How could wealth which is meant to make people happy make him unhappy? Last but not the least, what made him laugh before dying? Answer these questions, if you can. But if you choose to keep mum despite knowing the answers, your head would roll off your shoulders!"

At once answered the king, "Bhusan, like most of the people, desired wealth, but he was not given any chance to decide in what way he would like the wealth to come to him. Given that chance, he would have liked the wealth to come to him in a natural way, say, through a reward from the king for some good deed, or through his coming across a hidden treasure which he could have

owned openly.

"But wealth came to him in an abnormal way. Another man perhaps could have used it cleverly. But he was basically an honest man. The incident did not go well with his way of life. That caused him unhappiness.

"He laughed out of a sudden spurt of happiness when he realised that with his death the unwelcome wealth would remain buried and his sons would not have to worry about it. If by chance they dug the ground and got it, the world would know that they had stumbled upon a buried treasure. They would be free to use it in a normal way!"

No sooner had the king finished giving his reply than the vampire, along with the corpse, gave him the slip.





THE GREEN-EYED MONSTER

In a small town of China lived a tailor named Ching. All he had for an asset, his small house besides a sewing machine. But the real asset he had was his sincerity. He worked hard and stood by his word. Naturally, he prospered well. Soon he bought four new machines and provided work to four other hands.

His customers were extremely pleased with him. They would pay him even more than what he charged them. When Ching would show his reluctance to receive such extra fees, they would send him gifts such as fruits, vegetables, and milk.

In the same town lived ten more tailors. Ching became their eyesore. They never realised that if they did not pros-

per, it was because they were not as hard or as sincere at work as Ching. They passed their time inventing and circulating damaging rumours about Ching.

But the people of the town never believed in such mischievous rumours. They knew too well that the other tailors were just jealous of Ching.

Now, when the ten tailors saw that they could not do any harm to their rival by mere wicked words, they were quite pensive.

The leader of this gang of ten was Bang. "As long as Ching continues to prosper at this rate, we have no future in the trade," he lamented one day.

"There are necromancers who can stop people from prosper-



ing," observed a friend. The hint was taken up. They went to meet a necromancer who lived at a distance of half-day's walk. But the necromancer was out of station. They returned disappointed.

But next day a stranger knocked at Bang's door. "You desired to meet my venerable teacher, the great necromancer. Well, he sent me, his chief disciple, to see if I can be of any help to you. My teacher is too busy to come."

The stranger's apparel showed him to be a necromancer. Bang confided to him the cause of their heart-burning.

"If we must harass Ching, we have to take the help of an imp. The process is a bit expensive," observed the stranger.

"Well, I don't mind expense for sake of the work!" said Bang.

"That is like a well-meaning client. Now, here is a magic lemon. You have to put inside it a small ball of pure gold and leave the lemon at Ching's house."

Bang accepted the lemon with thanks and paid the necromancer his due. He had to sell the only piece of land he possessed in order to buy the gold necessary. Then he went to meet Ching and took care to leave the lemon in his house.

The stranger visited all the other nine tailors too and distributed the magic lemons among them. Some had to pledge their machines and some had to sell their lands for the gold. But all managed to leave the gold-filled lemons in Ching's house.

Then began their anxious waiting to see Ching's condition deteriorating. But what happened was the opposite. Ching added a new wing to his workshop, with ten new machines arranged in an array.

The gang of ten made a

hurried trip to the necromancer and demanded agitatedly, "Where is your chief disciple?"

"Chief disciple? I have no disciple at all!" replied the necromancer.

The gang returned with their heads hung.

Ching invited them to see the extension of his workshop. Bang, unable to suppress his curiosity, asked, "Brother Ching, what is the secret of this sudden boost in your condition?"

"That is a miracle. Some beneficent being sent me ten lemons with ten gold balls. I used the lemons in my drink and used the gold for buying the new machines."

The ten guests looked at one another. Tears drizzled in their eyes.

"My brother, it is some god

who asked us to leave those gold-filled lemons here. We fools were jealous of you and had to pay the price for our ill-will," confessed Bang. His friends nodded.

"You were indeed fools to do so, my friends. It is no god that misguided you, but the green-eyed monster, the being of jealousy. However, you are welcome to work here—with my machines. I have not yet employed new hands," said Ching.

They accepted the offer.

It was sheer good luck that Ching had overheard their discussion on the eve of their first visit to the necromancer's house. He could don a disguise and play the trick on them.

But he never disclosed this to the ten until very late when they had grown old and wise.



How The Best Became Worst

Emperor Akbar paid a visit to his farm, followed by Birbal, his court-jester. Trotting leisurely, he came near a field teeming with tender brinjals.

"What a lusty crop of brinjals!" he exclaimed.

"Indeed, my lord. The brinjal is the best of vegetables!" commented Birbal.

"It only looks nice. I don't relish the seed-infested fruit!" remarked the Emperor.

"How can you, my lord! The brinjal is the worst of vegetables!" observed the jester.

"Did you not say just now that the brinjal is the best of vegetables? How do you say that it is the worst?" demanded the Emperor.

"My lord, I am your servant, not the brinjal's!" was Birbal's reply.



It was a bazar road. The time was evening. A crowd was returning from a festival.

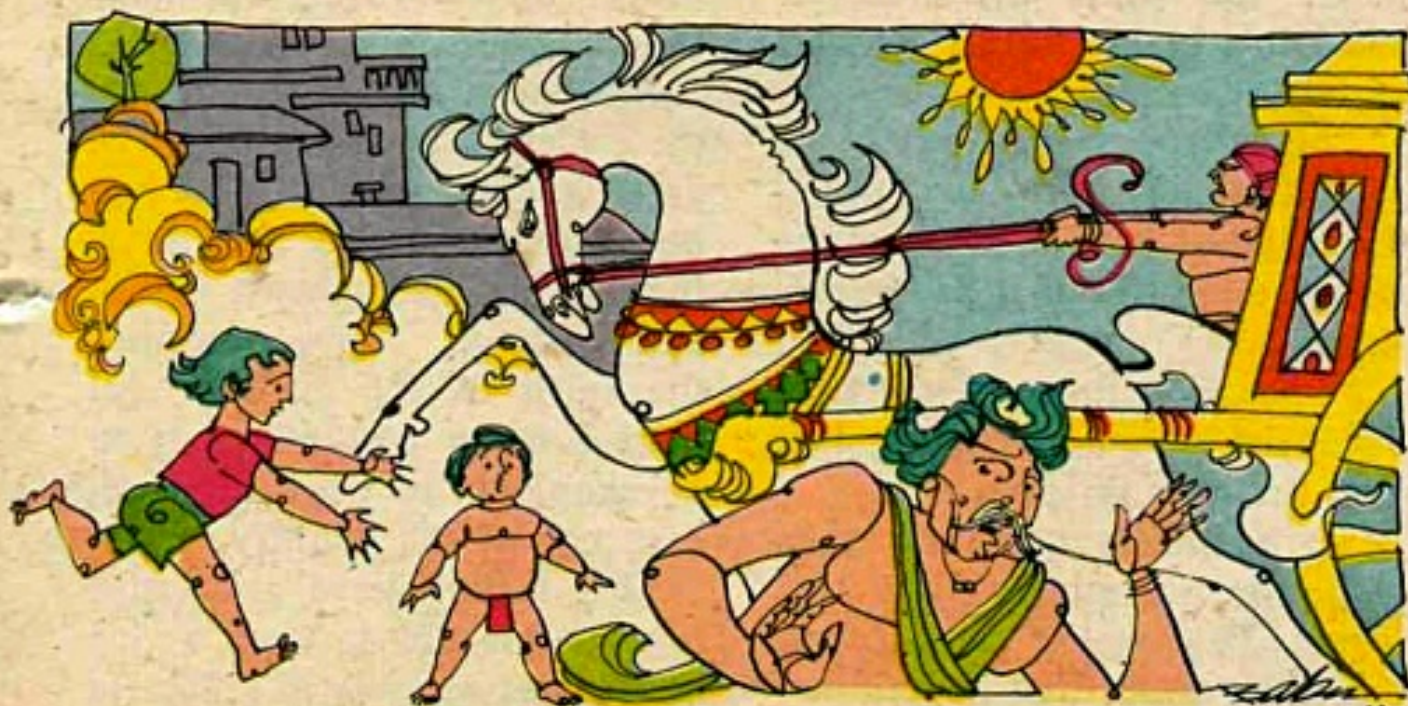
Suddenly, at a turn of the road, a horse-drawn carriage stormed into the crowd. The crowd parted. But a small boy who was at the middle of the road stood stupefied. Those who looked on thought that he was going to be crushed under the carriage.

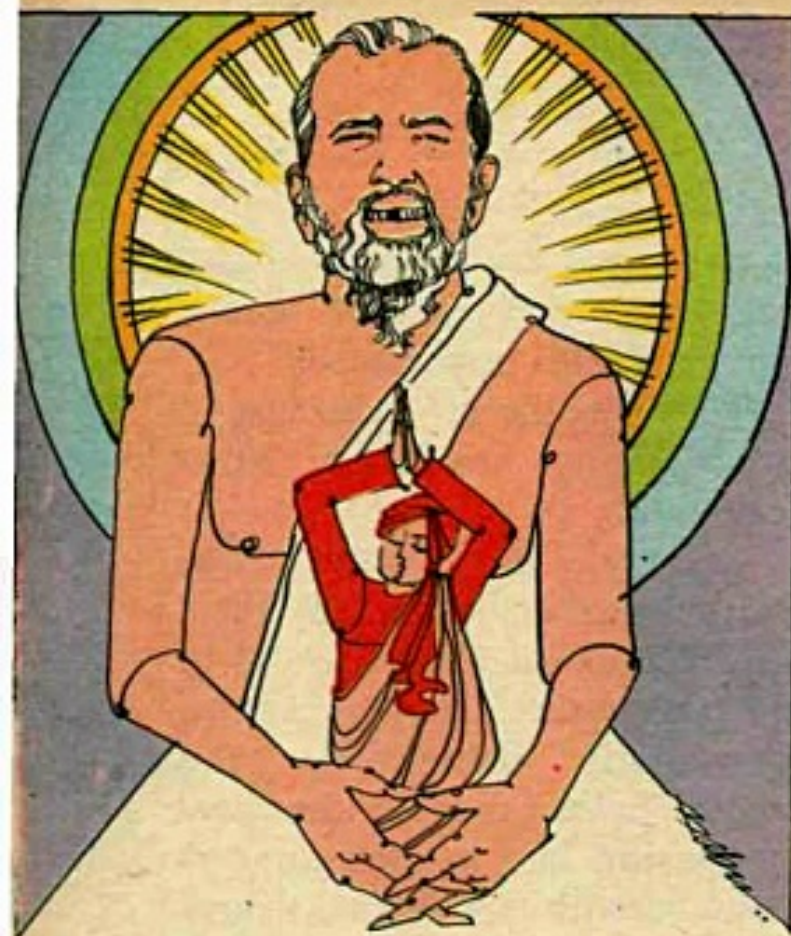
Someone leaped into the road and dragged the boy to the other side, just in the nick of time. Those who saw the incident heaved sighs of relief, but their surprise knew no bound when they saw the saviour of

the boy. The saviour was a six year old boy himself!

That was the boy who was to grow famous as Swami Vivekananda.

Earlier, his name was Narendranath. Born in 1863, in a suburb of Calcutta, son of a prosperous lawyer named Viswanath Dutta, he too would have taken to the legal profession had he not come in contact with Sri Ramakrishna. In fact Sri Ramakrishna said that Vivekananda was a great soul born with the sole mission of enlightening and serving man. He could not have led an ordinary life.





No doubt, Vivekananda was different even as a child—never afraid of dangers, ever eager to serve the poor and the sick. But what was most remarkable in his nature was his quest for truth.

“Have you seen God?” he would ask any holy man he met. He did not hear a reply in the positive until he met Sri Ramakrishna.

“I see God just as I see you; I see Him even more concretely,” said Sri Ramakrishna.

To a sincere question, thus came the disarmingly frank answer. The young seeker was left in no doubt that he had met

his master, the one who would lead him on the true path. By and by he forgot all his worldly needs. All that mattered to him was what his master wanted of him.

His father expired and the family faced a financial crisis. Sri Ramakrishna worshipped Mother Kali. Vivekananda had often heard his master say that whatever he asked of the Mother was granted. “Would you pray to Her to solve my crisis?” Vivekananda asked his master. No, the master advised him to do it himself.

But alone before the image of Kali, Vivekananda was so overwhelmed by Her presence that he forgot his petty needs. He realised that his life was meant for worrying about much bigger issues.

Indeed, it was high time for the issues to be taken up. The great spiritual past of India had been forgotten. By and large the people had grown selfish and ignorant. Poverty sapped the spirit of the masses. Sri Ramakrishna certainly wanted Vivekananda to work for a resurgence of the country.

This feeling gave a decisive turn to his life as soon as his master passed away in 1886. He

organised a small group of Sri Ramakrishna's disciples. The group learnt to live a highly disciplined life.

Vivekananda undertook a tour of India in 1888. This was a great event. Thousands came in his contact. Princes or peasants, all were deeply impressed by him. He was never tired of telling the people how to be guided by true values of life. He exhorted the educated and the rich to serve the country with their knowledge and wealth. While his wisdom and scholarship stunned the pundits, his simple arguments brought light to many a dark mind.

Once a raja boasted before him that he did not believe in the idol-worship. "What is there in a stone-image?" he asked.

On the wall hung a picture of the raja. Vivekananda asked the raja's minister to bring it down. That done, he asked the minister to spit on it.

The minister, naturally, looked scared.

"What is there in a piece of canvas to look at it with such awe?" asked Vivekananda. Then he went on to explain that when one worshipped an



idol, one did not offer his devotion to the stone, but to God. The stone-image represented God, just as the picture represented the raja.

Innumerable people became his disciples. Some of them requested him to proceed to Chicago in America where a world conference of religions was going to be held. He ought to present there the true Hindu concept of religion.

Vivekananda was not sure. But one day he saw in a vision his master walking over the sea, asking him to follow.

This was a clear direction. He sailed for Chicago. He was

then thirty.

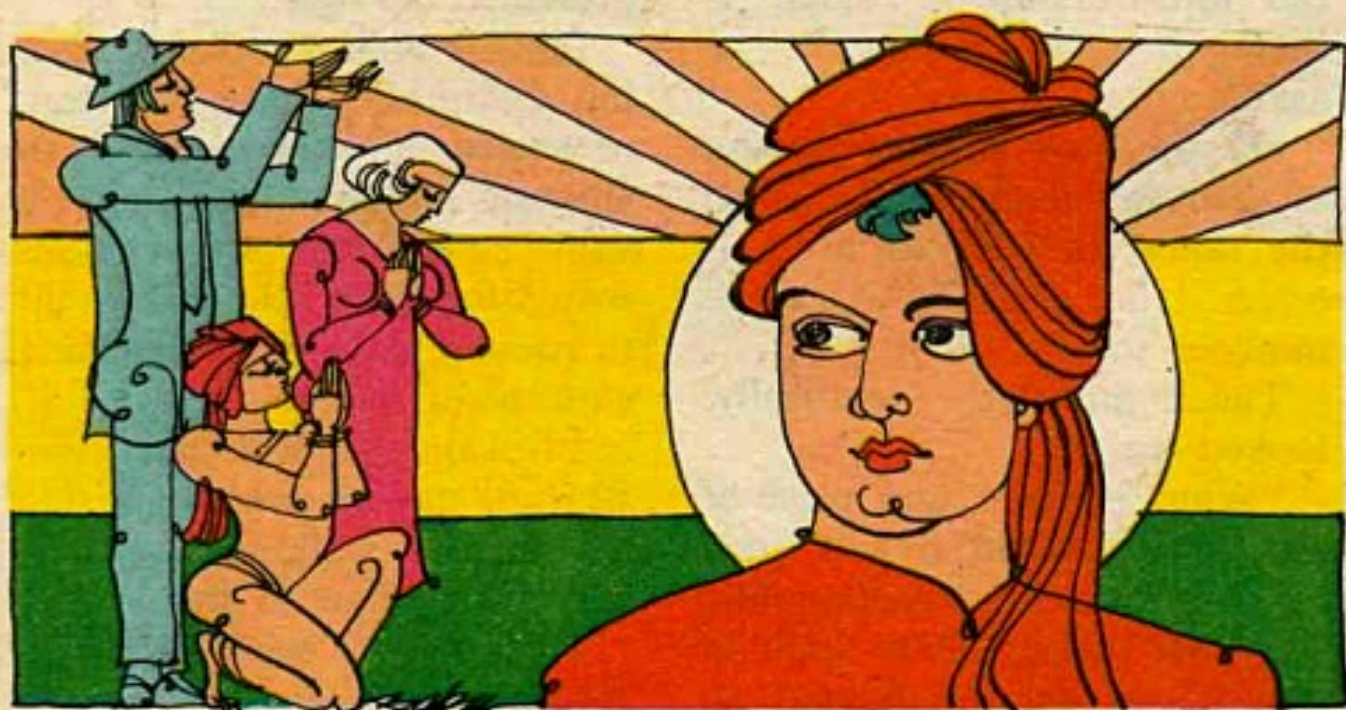
The journey was strenuous and he faced many ordeals in a country of strangers. But ultimately when he spoke in the conference, he became a hero overnight. He addressed his audience as "Sisters and Brothers of America" and that won him an instant popularity. For him, it had been an outpouring of his heart. He narrated in brief how the ancient Indian *dharma* viewed the whole mankind as the manifestation of God and how its approach was universal. His speech was a revelation for the West.

He had a highly purposeful tour of the Western countries. Many well-known Americans and Europeans became his disciples. Among them was Miss

Margaret Noble, later known as Sister Nivedita.

He was given great ovations when he returned to India. He devoted himself to organising a disciplined order of monks who would dedicate themselves to the spiritual and social welfare of the people. In 1897 he founded the Ramakrishna Mission. At Belur, not far from Calcutta, he founded a monastery which became the main centre of the mission.

Giving a firm base to Sri Ramakrishna's vision, working tirelessly till the last moment of his life, inspiring tens of thousands of people in India and abroad with the message of Truth, Swami Vivekananda passed away in 1902. He was only thirtynine.



MIRACLE OF PRAYER

Long long ago when the land of Koshala was ruled by King Ambarisa, there was a prolonged drought. Rivers and wells dried up and the crop failed.



The worried king was advised by his ministers and priests to perform a certain *Yajna* which could evoke rain. It had to be performed with great caution.



This kind of *Yajna* required the sacrifice of a horse. An excellent horse was secured for the purpose. It was bathed and bedecked with flowers and kept ready for sacrifice at the right moment.



Some gods who mistook the king's purpose and thought that he was performing the *Yajna* to claim heaven, stole the horse away in order to foil the rite.

The king and the priests were awfully upset when it was reported that the horse was missing. Royal soldiers searched every possible place—jungles, hills, and the stables of the rich—to trace the missing horse.



But the horse could not be found. To the pensive king, the priests told that the only alternative to the horse in the circumstance was a young Brahmin boy who had on his body some specific signs of purity.

It was not easy to find a boy who should possess the required qualities and be available for the sacrifice. After a long search, the king learnt that Richika, the sage, had three sons having the qualities. He met the sage.



Richika, too fond of his eldest son, was unwilling to part with him. His wife was unwilling to part with their youngest son. However, their second son, Sunahsefa, stepped forward and offered himself for the great cause.

The happy king began his return journey to his palace, along with Sunahsefa. On the way came the hermitage of Viswamitra, Sunahsefa's maternal uncle. The boy went to meet him.





Upon hearing from the boy all that happened, Viswamitra was moved to compassion. He taught the boy a hymn. "If you can chant this with deep devotion, you shall be saved," he said. Sunahsefa reached the palace. He was made ready for sacrifice.

As Sunahsefa was led to the altar of the Yajna, he began chanting that all stood stunned, shedding tears.



Suddenly the sky grew clouded. Out of the fire appeared Indra. "Your sincere prayer has achieved what your sacrifice would have achieved. The spell of drought is broken. Go and be happy," said Indra, to everybody's untold delight.

THE CHANGE

Sudhir and Prakash were two brothers. Sudhir, the younger one, worked hard in their fields. But Prakash was an idler. He whiled away his time lying on a cot or leaning against a pillow, dozing or yawning.

Both got married. Their wives watched the situation for a few days. Then Prakash's wife began telling her husband, "Are you not ashamed of your idleness? Must you let your poor younger brother do all the work?"

Soon it was observed that Prakash had started going to the fields. In fact, in a few days he proved himself a hard and intelligent worker.

But Sudhir was seen passing his time dozing and yawning, for his wife was whispering to him, "Must you be foolish enough to work like a donkey while your elder brother spends his time happily at home?"



Evening was slowly descending on the valley. For some unknown reason the train came to a halt on the bridge over the river.



"Chambal!" one passenger whispered to another.

Raman sprang up to his feet and hurried to the door. It was open. Before him sprawled the strange valley with its puzzling ravines.

The dacoit-infested valley, spread over Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, was the synonym of danger, knew Raman. Of course, the part of it one saw on one's journey from the South to Delhi perhaps had nothing evil in it; nevertheless, it inspired awe.

The train started with a jerk. Raman who stood at the brink of the door got a jolt and was about to tumble down when someone caught hold of him

Travels Through India **THE CITY**

from behind.

He was another boy—of Raman's age. Raman learnt that his name was Ravi. He too was on his way to Delhi.

They became friends. The train reached Delhi a few hours later. Raman's parents had come to the station to receive him. Raman introduced Ravi to them.

But Ravi looked rather distraught. He had expected to



ETERNAL

They came out of the railway station and boarded a taxi and entered the country's capital.

At night the city looked like a huge circus where feats were



see his uncle there. There must have been numerous uncles in the hustling and bustling crowd. But none of them was his!

"Maybe, your message never reached him. Why don't you spend the night with us?" proposed Raman's father.

"Yes, yes, that would be just wonderful. We can look for your uncle tomorrow. Our lodge is not far from the historic Red Fort. I could show you the monument in the morning," said Raman with joy.

Ravi accepted the offer.

performed only with colourful lights.

"Do you know, boys? Delhi has been a city for thousands of years—before the *Mahabharata* war. Indraprastha and Hastinapur were two of the ancient names of the city. It is said that the place known as Delhi today has been seven different cities at different times," observed Raman's father.

Ravi felt quite excited. He was lucky to find a friend like Raman in his first ever visit to the city of his dreams.



THE SLEEPING BEAUTY



In the far corner of the kingdom was a dense forest. Woodcutters said that the centre of the forest was so thickly wooded that even sunlight failed to penetrate it.

But all the people who lived around the forest believed that in the dense-most part of the forest stood an enchanted castle. Very few had ever had a glimpse of it, but none of them drew

near it, for, they could see some human figures in the castle, which, they thought, were ghosts.

One day a prince who came from a faraway land and entered the forest for adventure was surprised to see himself standing before the castle. He understood that he had lost his way and someone has to show him the way out. And, from yards away, he could see a number of people in and around the castle.

He called out for them; but no response came. He clapped his hands and whistled; but nobody seemed to hear.

Closer to the castle he went and realised that all those people had fallen asleep amidst their activities!

This was surely strange. The prince entered the castle and was charmed by its beauty. But imagine his wonder when, climbing the flight of stairs, he came across an elegant room

and saw lying upon a cosy bed the most beautiful damsel he could dream of!

Thrilled he stood. And before he knew what he was doing, he had kissed the beauty!

She fluttered open her eyes and sat up. Instantly all the sleeping people woke up. They

went to their work as if nothing had happened.

But do you know what had happened? The beauty was a princess born a hundred plus sixteen years ago! Her parents had invited seven fairies to bless her and had forgotten the eighth one, an angry old fairy. But she came uninvited and threw a curse upon the princess. According to that curse, the princess was to die of a prick from a spindle. But the youngest of the fairies had the power to mellow the curse down to a century's sleep.

Thus, when sixteen, the princess had her hand pricked and she fell asleep. The well-meaning fairy put everybody else to sleep too. And she had so ordained that all would wake up the day a brave prince would kiss the princess.

And that is what happened a hundred years later.

The prince and the princess married.

It was Charles Perrault who wrote down this story—which perhaps circulated as a folk tale earlier—in French. The English translation was made by Robert Samber in early eighteenth century.



The Forlorn Girl who

In a dark corner of the house sat a little girl and a little boy, huddled together. The boy was a cripple; the girl was almost blind.

Orphans, they had been led to a charity-house for the aged and the abandoned. It was a gloomy place. Those who came there were the helpless ones willing to count their days for death to take them away.

The nine-year old girl, Annie Sullivan, was afraid that they will take away her little brother Jimmie from her, for, the male inmates of the house were not allowed to live with the female inmates. But Annie could not let them do so. It was not because she had nobody else to talk to, but because Jimmie was dangerously sick and he needed her constant care.

At night Annie slept with her tiny hand resting on Jimmie. One night she woke up in

horror. Jimmie was missing. An eerie fear crept into her. She groped her way into a dark nook where those who died were kept before their burial.

Indeed, her brother's cold body was there.

This was in 1876. The house was Tewksbury in Massachusetts, America.

Life in the house became a nightmare for Annie. She heard that some big men were coming to inspect the institution. She had heard stories of human kindness. Maybe, those who were coming would be kind to her. She could try tell them her mind.

The big men stood inspecting the house. Annie faltered at them and looking at the one who seemed to be their leader, cried out, "I want to go to school!"

The leader was a kind man. Annie entered the Perkins Insti-



INTERNATIONAL

gave the World a Genius



tute for the Blind.

She did not know to spell even her name. She was the most backward student in her class, to begin with. But in a few years she was awarded the best-student certificate.

Her study over, she must earn her livelihood. A captain was in the need of a governess for his daughter who was deaf, dumb and blind. Annie joined his household.

But little did she imagine

what a challenge awaited her. The captain's daughter was the very personification of fury and indiscipline. It was with great patience and deep understanding that Annie tamed and educated her.

This was the girl to emerge as Helen Keller whose extraordinary achievement in education made her a world figure. Behind Helen Keller's genius lay the love and will-power of Annie, once a forlorn little girl.

YEAR OF THE CHILD '79



A Tale from the Panchatantra

THE BIG BROTHER!

The following story was once narrated by a king to a man whom chance had made him the general of the royal army, although he had never been a soldier in his life:-

In a forest lived a lion-couple. The lioness had given birth to two cubs. The lion roamed about in the forest and killed some small animal and brought it for the lioness to eat. This went on daily.

One rainy day the lion brought home a fox-cub. "I've brought it alive because I did not feel like killing such an innocent cub," he told the lioness.

"And don't ask me to kill it either. Its mother must have lost her way or died. I will nurse it just like my own cubs," said the lioness.

Days passed. The three cubs grew up as brothers. The fox-

cub, being older than the lion-cubs, often bossed over them. The lion-cubs resigned to his captainship because their mother had asked them not to be disobedient to their big brother!

One day while the three cubs were playing near a brook, they saw an elephant appearing before them. The lion-cubs roared. Although they were no match for the large creature, they staged mock-attacks against him.

But the fox-cub was terrified at the elephant's sight. "Come on, let us get away!" he said.

"Why? Let us fight him!" roared out the lion-cubs.

Angry at their disobedience, the fox-cub slapped them and ordered them to follow him.

Back at home, the lion-cubs laughed and complained to their

mother, "Our big brother is a coward, a poltroon!"

"Shut up!" yelled the fox-cub, and he raised a fore-paw to slap them again.

"Tut, tut!" the lioness tried to calm him down. "Should you be so rude to your little brothers?"

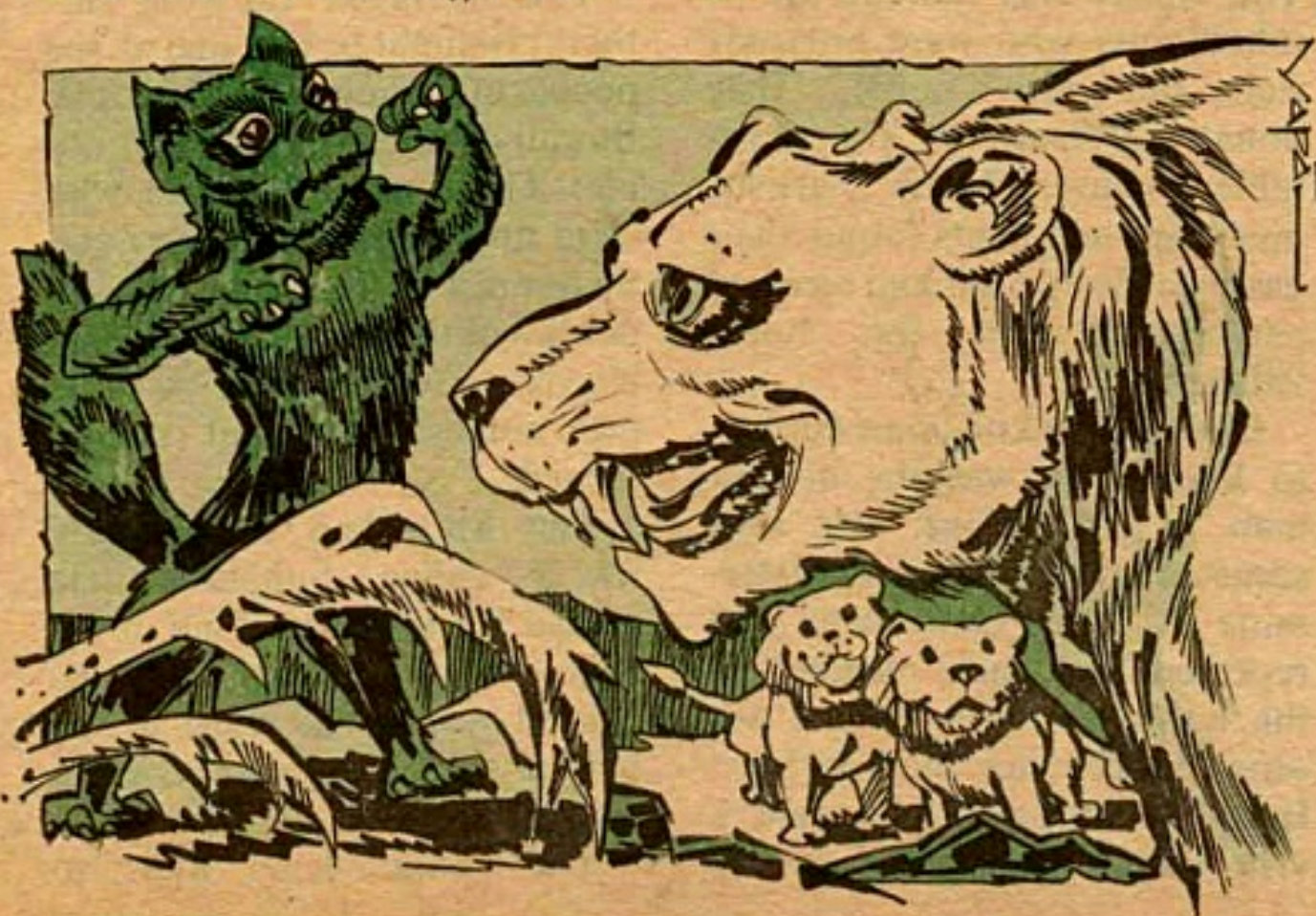
"It seems they don't realise how strong and courageous I am. They laugh at my cost. They deserve to be punished!" exclaimed the fox-cub, flexing his muscles.

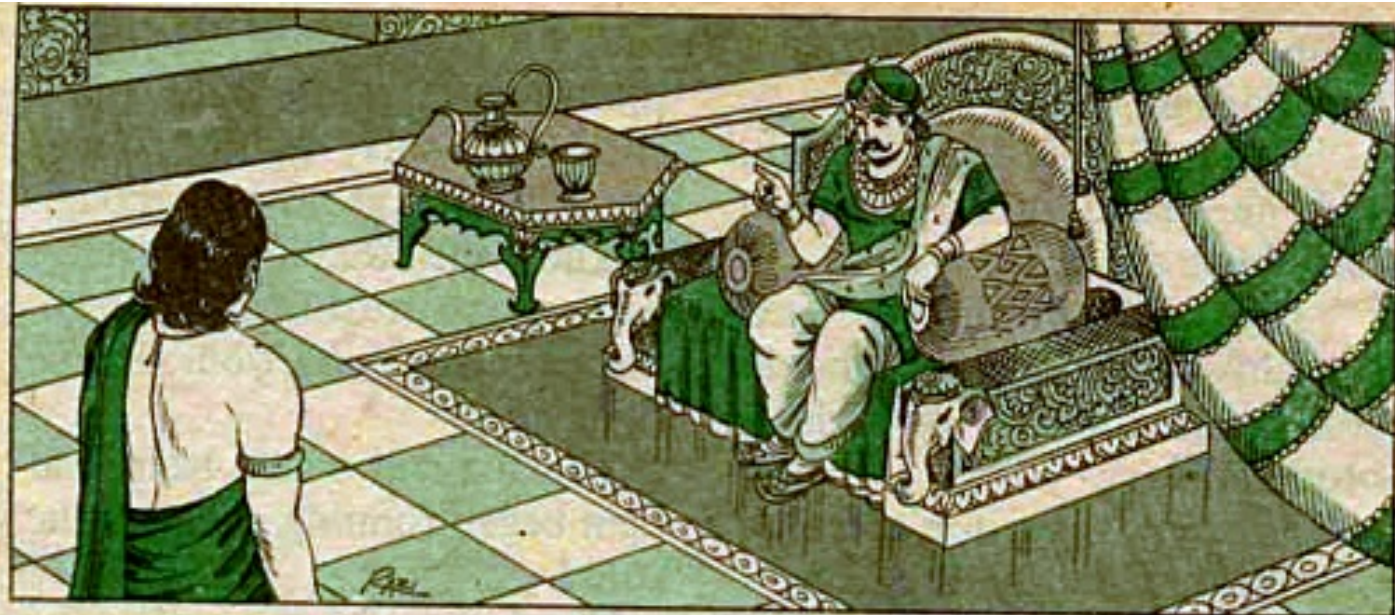
The lioness remained looking at him for a while. Then, asking her own cubs to leave the place for a moment, she told the fox-

cub, "It is high time I tell you the truth. You are only a fox-cub, I am sorry to say. Once my sons are grown-up enough to know this, they might avenge your rough treatment of them. Better make good your escape right now!"

The fox-cub slunk back and then began running as fast as he could.

The king, after narrating the story, advised the man to retire to his village immediately. "Once my soldiers know that you are commanding them without ever being a soldier yourself, they might endanger your life!" he said.





NOBLEST OF THE LOT

Roopgram was a large village in the ancient kingdom of Vishal. The village was famous for its inhabitants who were not only rich but also noble. They donated liberally to any charitable cause. Many artists, musicians and poets found their haven at Roopgram and received patronage from the noble villagers.

One day the king grew curious to know who was the noblest man in the village. He sent some of his courtiers to determine it. They came back and reported that each member of the nobility vied with one another in proving their virtues! Even the minister, who paid a visit there, was unable to say

who was the noblest of them all.

This intrigued the king further. "It might be true that all the people of Roopgram were noble. But all cannot be uniformly noble. There must be some who were nobler than the rest; and there must be one who was the noblest of the lot!" said the king. His desire to determine who was the noblest man got strengthened.

The king had a scholarly friend called Subhadra. He passed his time travelling in the wide world. Whenever he needed respite, he came to the palace. The king was happy in his company.

The king sent him to

Roopgram, when, after a travel, Subhadra returned to enjoy his royal friend's hospitality.

Subhadra met a villager called Mahindra soon after his arrival at Roopgram. "I am ready to narrate to you the qualities and achievements of the noble folk of the village. I can also introduce to you as many of them are available. But you must pay me a rupee for each of them."

Subhadra had heard about this unusual vocation of Mahindra from the courtiers who had earlier visited the village. He agreed to his condition.

By evening, Mahindra had narrated the glory of a hundred noblemen. Subhadra was deeply impressed by his narration and humility. He paid him a hundred rupees, but observed, "In a village inhabited by so many great men, is it not queer that you must earn in this fashion?"

"Why, sir, if you feel my conduct unjust, you may take back the money," said Mahindra.

"Far from that. In fact, I am so happy with you that I would have paid even more. What I meant was, your talent could be perhaps put to better



use. Tell me, my friend, how do you propose to spend your income?" asked Subhadra.

Mahindra looked grave. Then he said, "I have a feeling that you are a big-hearted man. I can tell you all, provided you believe it."

"I cannot disbelieve you," assured Subhadra.

Mahindra led Subhadra to a hamlet outside the village. There the people appeared to be leading a wretched life.

"Who are these people?" asked Subhadra.

"Twentyfive years ago this village had been visited by a sage. These unlucky fellows,

under some evil influence, were cruel to him. The sage threw a curse on them saying that they would lead a miserable life; whoever helped them would be reduced to misery too! Soon the villagers repented and begged for the sage's pardon. The sage softened and said that their condition would change only if someone, without leaving the village, could pay a thousand rupees to each of them. I have taken up that mission. So far I have been able to redeem only five of them. Many more are left," explained Mahindra.

"Are you not afraid of being reduced to misery yourself?" queried Subhadra.

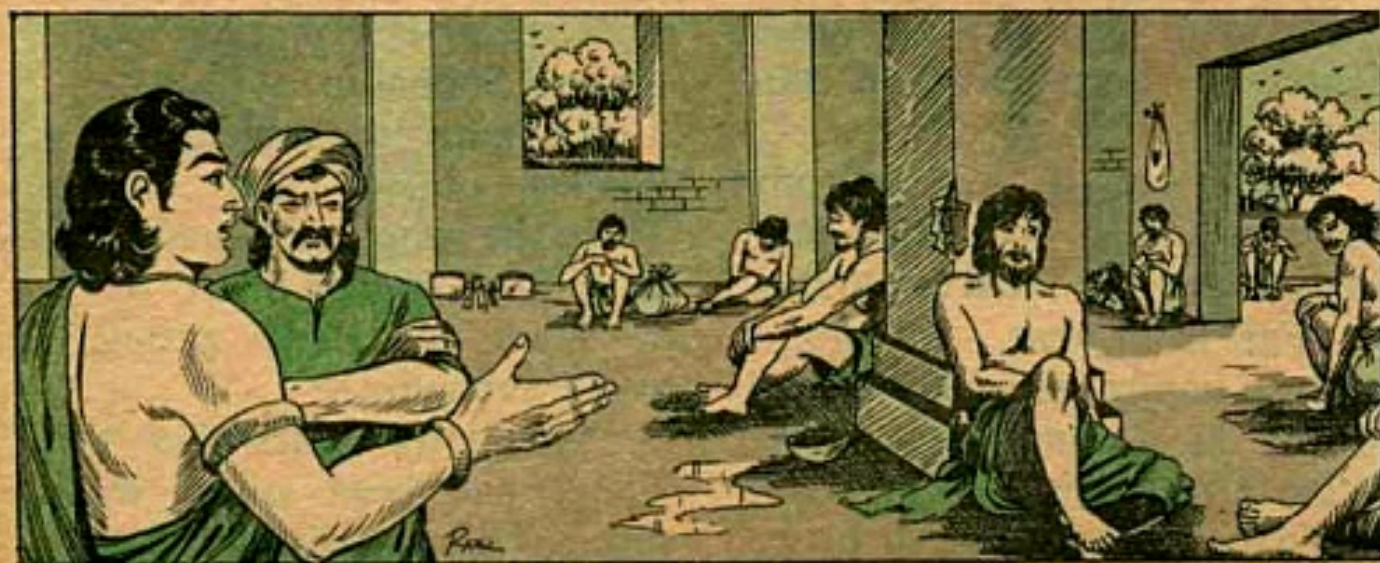
"I am alone. I sleep under a tree; don't have even a thatch to lose!" replied Mahindra.

Subhadra returned to the

palace and reported to the king, "The noblest man in Roopgram is Mahindra." Then he narrated all about Mahindra's mission.

"My lord, it is not because of his mission alone that Mahindra is the noblest man, but because he does not have the slightest urge to be known as a nobleman himself. He sincerely sings the glory of others. All know it. But nobody sings his glory. Others derive some satisfaction from their fame. But Mahindra has no attraction even for that."

The king was amazed. He gave Mahindra a nominal work which he was to do without leaving his village and fixed his salary at five thousand rupees a month so that he could redeem all those miserable people in a year's time.





THE SAGA OF SHIVA

So deep was Gajasur's devotion for Shiva that Shiva was obliged to dwell in his heart, in the form of a symbol.

But Gajasur, after all, was a demon. True to his demon-nature, he became a tyrant and harassed all—men as well as the gods.

It was a strange situation. On one hand everybody desired Gajasur's death. On the other hand, by the virtue of Shiva's presence in his heart, he had grown indestructible.

It was not that only an emanation of Shiva was with the demon, but the whole of Shiva. That is the boon he had obtained from Shiva.

Parvati, distressed at Shiva's absence from Kailash, created a host of luminous beings out of the aura of her body. The first among them was called

Ganapati while the others were called the Ganas. They guarded her and served her.

She looked upon them as her children.

But when Parvati saw no sign of Shiva's return, she brought the situation to Vishnu's notice. Vishnu and the gods were already feeling concerned about the invincibility of Gajasur. They now decided to act.

They took the forms of musicians and proceeded to Shonitpur—the home of Gajasur. Nandi, Shiva's dear servant, assumed the form of a bull. As the disguised gods sang, drummed and played flute, Nandi danced rhythmically.

The news of the dancing bull and the party of musicians soon reached Gajasur. Curious, he had them called to his presence.

The disguised gods sang aloud hymns to Shiva. At that the presence of Shiva that quietly resided inside the demon's heart began to feel restless. The demon felt suffocated. He also heard a voice warning him of his imminent death. He invoked Shiva.

Shiva confirmed the voice but was willing to grant him some boons.

The demon wished to remain with him forever and be adored by the devotees.

He also expressed a desire that his skin should be used by his Lord. Last, it was his desire that his head must remain alive.

Shiva granted the boons. The demon remained with him as a mouse. Shiva agreed to use his skin for his clothing.

As Shiva came out of Gajasur, the demon collapsed and died. The gods and Nandi recovered their true forms and greeted Shiva. They all began their march towards Kailash.

Parvati came to know that Shiva, in company of the gods, was on his way home. She asked the new-born Ganas to guard the house so that she could take bath and get ready to receive the party.

But the party of the Rudras, Shiva's servants, reached there sooner than she had expected.



The gods were yet to arrive.

The Rudras, too eager to inform Parvati of Shiva's return, were about to enter the house when the Ganas checked them. The Rudras did not know who these Ganas were. They grew furious. "We have the sanction of Shiva to go anywhere we like!" they shouted. The Ganas did not recognise them. But strong as they were with Parvati's power, they drove them away.

Humiliated, the Rudras ran to Shiva and reported that a host of strange beings did not allow them to enter Kailash. Shiva instantly sent his trident against the Ganas. The trident struck them and destroyed their heads.

By the time Shiva, Vishnu, and the others reached Kailash, Parvati was overwhelmed with

sorrow at the death of the Ganas. She did not come forward to receive them.

Vishnu realised the gravity of the situation. He told Shiva that the Ganas must be revived somehow or the other.

Shiva remembered Gajasur's prayer. The demon, whose head was like that of an elephant, had desired his head to remain alive for ever.

Shiva had the demon's head brought. He fixed it on the shoulders of the chief of the Ganas, Ganapati. Heads of a horde of elephants were secured for the other Ganas too.

Back to life, the Ganas prostrated themselves to Shiva and received his blessings.

Parvati rejoiced at the new form of her children. All were happy.

(To continue)





TRAPPED IN THE TUNNEL!-2

The earthquake had toppled the skeleton from an upper chamber of a cavern inside the tunnel itself. Curious, Mintoo climbed up.

Up, what should he see but a huge heap of gold coins. He understood that all that remained of the fellow who hid them and guarded them was the skeleton!



But soon he began worrying again. How to get out of the tunnel? Pacing in the labyrinth, he saw bubbles on water at one place.



He sat down and began removing the stones. There was an opening into a lower tunnel.





Carefully he entered the opening. First he plodded through the water and then swam, still inside the tunnel.



The tunnel ended and he floated up to the surface of the river. What a joy to raise the head again into the sunlight!



By then Meena, her parents, and Jhandoo had got terribly upset thinking that Mintoo had been shut up forever!



Standing between the hill and the river, it was the baby elephant who saw Mintoo first. His trumpeting attracted others to the spot.



How Guests Became Thieves

In days gone by the kingdom of Vidisha was famous for the honesty of its citizens. There was no theft, no cheating and no violence in the kingdom.

Once a merchant from another land came to settle down in Vidisha. He built his house in a village near the capital.

After he had settled down, he invited his neighbours to a feast. The joyful event continued till late in the afternoon. The merchant and his wife were tired. They did not observe the guests while they were leaving.

After a rest for two hours, the merchant's wife busied herself in rearranging the house. Suddenly she screamed out, "Where is the gold dish in

which we entertained the guests to betel-nuts?"

The couple searched for the dish at every possible place. In the process, they found out that not only the gold dish, but also a number of smaller items were missing. Also, someone had led away their cow from the backyard.

"Good God, I was under the impression that all the people of Vidisha were trustworthy!" exclaimed the merchant.

Next morning, he was toying with the idea of reporting the incident to the king when his neighbours met him in a group.

"Please excuse me, our noble host, I had stolen this bagful

of pulse from your house," said one remorsefully. Another returned some clothes, yet another a tumbler. The cow too was restored to him.

"We do not know what came upon us that we betrayed your faith. Believe us, we are no thieves. We are extremely surprised over our own conduct," said a senior member of the party.

"But what about my gold dish? Who among you had stolen it? Come on. Confess!" demanded the merchant.

But the neighbours declared on oath that none of them had stolen the dish!

Just then two sepoy's arrived there and asked the merchant to proceed to the king's court. The merchant accompanied them.

In the court he saw his servant standing as a prisoner. The gold dish lay before the king. He learnt how the servant who had stolen it had carried it to a jeweller and how a guest of the jeweller, a nobleman from another land, recognised it to be one of the items that had been stolen from his home years ago.

They had dragged the servant to the court where the servant confessed to having stolen it



from the merchant's house.

"My lord, I had lost to a thief a large trunk full of gold ornaments and gold utensils!" the nobleman said.

The merchant looked pale. The king at once sent a number of his officers to search the merchant's house. Many of the ornaments which had been stolen from the nobleman's house were found.

In course of the investigation the king learnt about some of his own subjects stealing the merchant's things and restoring them to him later.

The wise minister explained the case in this way, "My lord,



the people of Vidisha are honest. This merchant who came from another land is a thief. It is upon eating the food given by this thief that our people felt the temptation to steal. But, by the morning, their minds had been filled with guilt and repentance. They returned the goods

they had stolen.

The king realised how important it was to keep the atmosphere of his land free from the influence of corrupt people. He drove away the merchant and never allowed anyone to settle down in Vidisha without verifying his past.

WONDER WITH COLOURS



THE HIDDEN ARMOURY

"My Lord, we must transfer our hidden armoury to a new place!" the minister told the king.

"Why?" asked the king in surprise.

"The officer in charge of the hidden armoury died six months ago. Since then his sons are spending a great deal of money which could not have been earned by their father through his salary," said the minister.

"So what?"

"I sent a spy to our enemy-king. The spy privately proposed to the king to sell the secret of our hidden armoury for a certain price. But the king said that he was not interested," stated the minister.

"So?" the king asked again.

"This only means that the enemy-king is in possession of the secret already. The late officer must have passed it on to him for a huge bribe. That explains how his sons can spend so freely," explained the minister.

The king understood.





THE SCHOLAR'S FANCY

In a certain village lived a scholar, Lambodar by name. However, he was popularly known as Lamboo Pundit.

He was well-versed in astrology and scriptures. As such, he was in much demand. At least a dozen people greeted him every day, affectionately addressing him as Lamboo Pundit. The seniors called him only Lamboo.

Lambodar disliked the way they shortened his name. In course of his talks with the people, he always referred to himself as Pundit Lambodar. But the villagers were too naive to get the hint. It was the shorter version of his name that continued to be in circulation.

"The defect lies in my name. It is rather long. I should choose for myself a name which should be at once short and

dignified. Let it be Shiva," he thought.

From the next day he kept on informing the villagers that he had changed his name to Shiva. They ought to address him as Pundit Shiva.

But old habits die hard. The villagers continued to call him Lamboo or Lamboo Pundit.

Disgusted, the scholar took a grim decision. That was to leave his own village and settle down at a new place where he could introduce himself to the people by his new name.

He chose a prosperous village miles away for his new field of work. It is said that a king is adored only within the boundary of his kingdom; but a scholar receives adoration wherever he goes. This proved true in our scholar's case. He became quite popular in his

new surrounding. Needless to say, the people knew him as Pundit Shiva.

One day, while buying firewood, the scholar's wife asked the shop-keeper, "Are these chips dry enough to make a good fire?"

"Ask anybody and you shall hear that Shiva's chips make fire just as Lord Shiva's third eye does!" exclaimed the shop-keeper whose name was Shiva.

On being reported this, the scholar fell into a depression. "Of what value is the name which a mere seller of chips vaunts? Better I change my name to Vishnu," he thought.

He informed the villagers of his decision. But the people of that locality were much devoted to Lord Shiva. The name Shiva was on the tips of their tongues. They found it difficult to address the scholar by his new name.

The scholar got annoyed. He left the village and settled down in a bazar where the people came to know him as Pundit Vishnu.

Days passed happily for the scholar. He earned well and was pleased with the popularity of his new name.

One afternoon a begging mendicant entertained him to a



song. The last line of the song announced its composer's name which was Vishnu.

"Who is this Vishnu?" asked the scholar.

"Who but myself! I sing my own songs!" replied the beggar.

At once the scholar grew an awful distaste for his name. From the very next hour he began telling all who visited him to call him Pundit Amar.

But the people of that village were devotees of Vishnu. They found it uncomfortable to change their habit of addressing the scholar.

The scholar left the bazar and took residence in a town.



To his great satisfaction he became known as Pundit Amar. Soon he grew popular for his knowledge of astrology. He earned well.

One day his maid-servant did not turn up for work. Next day she explained the cause of her absence: "I had to remain with a woman who lost her new-born son. She had named her son Amar—in honour of

you. She was under the impression that yours was an auspicious name. A great pity!"

The scholar sat with his head hung. Soon he packed off to his native village.

"Come, come, Lamboo—er—Pundit Shiva!" villagers who saw him exclaimed.

"Please don't hesitate to call me by my old name—Lamboo!" insisted the scholar.

SPOT THE TEN DIFFERENCES



THE WORLD'S LONGEST SEPULCHRE

You have already read about Tsi Hwang Ti, the Chinese emperor, who made a country-wide bonfire of books. He lived in 3rd century B.C. and is remembered better as the builder of the Great Wall of China.

The Great Wall, stretching for 1,684 miles, is known as the world's longest wall. But few remember that the wall is also the world's longest sepulchre. Innumerable workers who died while constructing the wall were buried under it; those who revolted were pushed into it and buried alive. Hundreds of authors and scholars who resisted the emperor's order for destroying the books were also led to the construction-site and buried under the wall along with their books!



PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



Mr. Gopal Shroti



Mr. Devidas Kesbekar

Can you formulate a caption in a few words, to suit these pictures related to each other? If yes, you may write it on a post card and mail to Photo Caption Contest, Chandamama, to reach us by 20th of the current month. A reward of Rs. 25/- will go to the best entry which will be published in the issue after the next.

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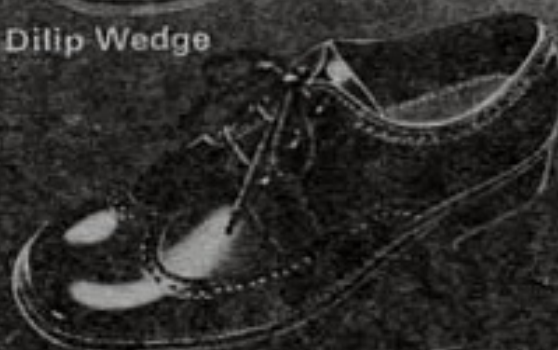
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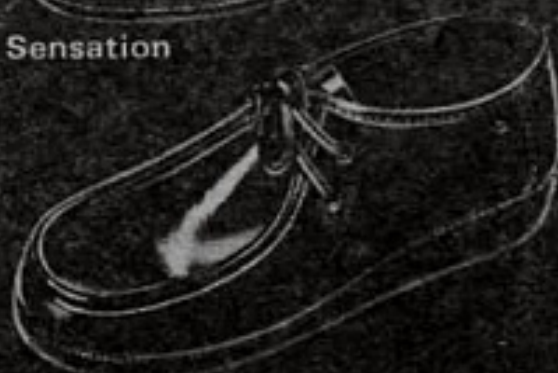
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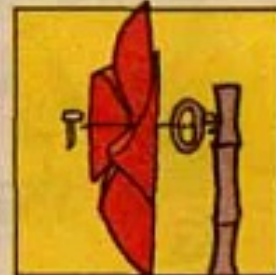
You will need: square
of thin cardboard,
scissors, a nail or pin,
hammer, button, bamboo
cane, pencil, ruler.



Steps to make:

Draw 2 diagonal lines from
corner to corner across
the square cardboard paper.
Make cuts from each corner
towards the centre—be sure
cuts are half the length of
one side of square.

Fold each corner into the
centre, press nail or pin
through the centre of the paper,
catching in all the corners.



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back, bang nail to
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